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THE MANIFEST DREAM AND ITS LATENT MEANING

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The distinction between manifest and latent content lies at the heart of dream interpretation, as central to work with dreams in psychoanalysis* today as when Freud first proposed it in 1900. We listen to a patient report a dream, note the nuances, tone and points of feeling in the report, hear the associations, all within the context of a given hour and state of the transference -- and the still larger context provided by the patient's history, character and previous hours -- and, from all this, offer an interpretation. What is this interpretation? What does it communicate to the patient that he is not aware of? In a general way, an interpretation illuminates the manifest dream -- and some portion of the surrounding information or context of associations, history, transference -- by drawing attention to the latent content, latent dream thoughts, or latent meaning. But what is the "latent content"? Is it a store of forgotten or repressed memories? An affective quality missing from the original dream report? Links of meaning between the dream and aspects of the patient's life? The disguised significance of the symbolism? Or the connection of the dream to the process of analysis that the patient does not see?

* For ease in reading, I will phase the discussion in terms of psychoanalysis and the analyst-patient pair. Much of what is said applies equally to psychoanalytic psychotherapy and at least a number of other related forms of psychotherapist-patient interactions.

I think "latent content" can refer to all of these, and probably others, and this multiplicity of referants should alert us to the fact that we are dealing with a broad and difficult idea, a concept that will require some exploration. Let me begin by going back to Freud's original definitions.

Freud develops the concepts of manifest and latent dream content in The Interpretation of Dreams in a way that closely overlaps the broader concepts of conscious and unconscious. He points out that he arrived at an understanding of dreams from earlier work with neurotic symptoms; he came to view the seemingly meaningless dream as the equally inexplicable symptom: the mystery in both cases was a disguise for impulses and conflicts that were resistant to awareness, that existed in the unconscious. The manifest dream is, thus, one of a series of phenomena that gives disguised, symbolic expression to unconscious conflict; others in the series include neurotic symptoms, parapraxes, typical styles of thought and relationship -- character structure -- and, of special usefulness in the psychoanalytic process, the transference. The manifest dream arises from the latent content just as a slip of the tongue, a symptom or a transference manifestation does from the unconscious. And, it follows, that interpreting a dream in terms of its latent meaning is one instance of making the unconscious conscious -- of working toward insight -- the goal of psychoanalysis as therapy

Yet the same sort of questions can be raised about the unconscious as I raised earlier about latent content. What do we mean by this concept; what does it mean to become conscious of something

that was formerly unconscious? Obviously we are dealing with broad and complex issues here, issues central to the theoretical structure of psychoanalysis. These are processes that have been extensively discussed by Freud and many later psychoanalysts and it may be presumptuous to think that I can add very much to our understanding of the manifest-latent and, behind it, the conscious-unconscious, distinction. Nevertheless, if I am able to provoke the reader to consider these well-known ideas in a slightly new way, I will have achieved my purpose.

Freud's principal definitions of manifest-latent and conscious-unconscious were set forth during his early work, prior to the introduction of a systematic theory of ego, superego, identification, and internalized relationships. As late as 1915, in "The Unconscious," the definitions of conscious and unconscious are given in terms of processes and regions in psychological space, though at the end of that essay "the ego" and "object cathexis" make their appearance. The centrality of the ego and the internal representations of relationships -- most clearly the superego in Freud's own work -- is set forth in The Ego and the Id of 1923, and become increasingly important aspects of the unconscious, though as was typical of Freud, he did not revise earlier work such as the theory of dreams to align it with these later developments. In the present exploration of manifest and latent dream content, we must be alert to the central role of representations of the self (ego) and others (objects) as components of the unconscious. We can be guided in this regard by Freud's later work as well as that large group of psychoanalysts who, with a variety of terms (the ego,

self, identity, object relations, internal objects, introjection) call attention to the fact that a central portion of the unconscious consists of the residue of conflictual (painful, traumatic, anxiety-ridden) relationships. In addition, our exploration will be guided by what seems to me a converging modern view of psychoanalytic theory as centrally concerned with meaning and the interpretation of human experience. I have in mind the work of the late George Klein (1976); Robert Lifton (1976); Jane Loevinger (1976); Paul Ricoeur (1970); Roy Schafer (1976, 1978); Yankelovich and Barrett (1970); and my own forthcoming book (Breger, in press).

THE DREAM AS A CONSTRUCTION

Let us begin with a closer consideration of what is meant, in the clinical context, by manifest and latent dream content. As should be obvious, there is only one actual dream: the private, largely visual drama that occurs during sleep. No one can see this -- can know it firsthand -- but the dreamer. And even he, most of the time, cannot recall it the next day. But some dreams are recalled, more or less well and with more or less revision, omission and elaboration, and are put into words. That is, certain private, visual dramas are made over into public, linguistic communications from patient to analyst. It is this verbal -- or written -- dream report that is called the "manifest dream." I stress these distinctions to emphasize that even at the level of the manifest dream we are dealing with processes of translation (from visual to verbal), of communication (from private to public), and of construction and reconstruction (by the dreamer in making his report

and by the analyst in attempting to picture it). The manifest dream or dream report is thus a psychological construction whose form is shaped by all the factors that affect such constructions: availability of certain self and object schemes, attention and interest in recall, anticipation of how the listener will react, skill at describing a subjective experience, anxiety, guilt, and so forth. Since much of what goes into constructing a manifest dream report occurs relatively automatically -- the dream is either recalled in the morning or it is not, it is reported in the course of an analytic hour however it comes along, certain associations occur and others do not -- we may not feel we are "constructing" anything. But "psychological construction" has a much wider meaning than this; in a general sense, all transactions between the person and the world involve constructions in which the perceiver, thinker, speaker, actor, or dreamer brings to bear his perceptual-cognitive schemas, linguistic structures or grammar, self and object models, and memory and dream schemas, in an interactive process. This is what Piaget means when he speaks of "the child's construction of reality"; reality does not exist "out there" as an unchanging substance, independent of our action; it is only known via interaction with a perceiver-thinker-actor who constructs it in terms of his existing models, thought patterns, schemas or mental structures. Because schemas change with development and are different in different individuals, the reality of a one-year-old is far different from that of a six-year-old or, again, a sixty-year-old. Dream reality is different from that of an awake, problem-solving state and we may distinguish the reality of a "neurotic," "psychotic" or relatively

"normal" person. In all these examples we infer a difference in psychological structure or schema on the basis of differences in behavior or reported experience.

These definitions of construction and schema, sketchily presented here, will prove central to the coming discussion which will, I hope, clarify their meaning further. We will see that latent content is not "content" at all but a particular form of construction or interpretation. Interpreting a manifest dream by delineating its latent content can then be seen as a process of reconstruction: in therapy it is a way of redefining personal (self and other) schemas.

WHAT IS "LATENT" IN A DREAM?

There is obviously no latent content of a dream; if there is content we have a manifest dream of some type; if there is no content there is no dream. What, then, is "latent"? Is it the dream itself, dreamt and now forgotten? This is one possible meaning of the "latent dream"; it accords with the definition of latent as that which is potential or dormant. Instances of this are common enough: we awake "knowing" we had a dream that we cannot recapture. Later, it all "comes back," stimulated by some event of the day. Sometimes, in the course of an analytic session, a patient will spontaneously recall a dream that he had forgotten, the trigger being some related association, thought or feeling during the hour. The dream was dreamt, perhaps recalled on awakening and then forgotten; it exists in a latent or potential state from which it can sometimes be retrieved, as these examples illustrate. Is this what is usually meant by the "latent dream" or "latent dream

content"? I think not. Forgotten dreams can be remembered, say during an analytic hour, yet we still speak of them as manifest dreams whose latent content remains to be analyzed or discovered. And other dreams may be clearly recalled, yet their meaning unknown to the dreamer, in which case we likewise speak of a manifest dream with a disguised or latent meaning. Attempting to equate the latent content with the forgotten dream puts one in the same constricted position as the early psychoanalytic theory that defined the unconscious as a repository of forgotten traumatic memories. This amnesia model proved of quite limited value -- both as a theory of neurotic symptom formation and as the basis for the cathartic treatment method. It captured a part of the processes of repression and the unconscious, but only a small part. Looking back from the vantage point of additional psychoanalytic experience, we now know that one can recover a forgotten or repressed memory yet still be plagued with unconscious conflicts. Repression involves more than forgetting or amnesia and there are many "mechanisms of defense," in addition to repression, which function to keep aspects of experience unconscious. And there is more to the unconscious than these mechanisms. The forgotten dream, like the forgotten traumatic event, is not what is latent in any but the most minor sense of the term.

Knowing one has had a dream but not being able to recall or report it may be viewed in another way -- a way that gets closer to the central meaning of latent content. For this inability to remember is a communication to oneself and one's analyst, a communication that may be part of an active disavowal that the dream -- with its particular feelings, fears and fantastic images -- has anything to do with oneself.

Like the hysteric who cannot recall the traumatic events associated with the onset of symptoms, and thus attempts to affirm that the events did not happen to her, the unreportable dream may be an attempt to separate the dream experience from the public, conscious version of oneself. And it is essentially such unconscious processes of disavowal, of dissociation from self, that one constantly encounters with remembered and reported dreams. Thus, in a psychoanalytic session a dream may be reported -- we have a clearly remembered manifest dream -- yet we still speak of the latent content or the latent meaning. What is "latent" is not some forgotten part of the dream, not even additional associations and the memories that they might lead to, but a different construction of the material at hand, a construction or interpretation which connects the dream -- along with associations, affects and other aspects of the patient -- to the conscious ego or sense of self. Pointing to the latent content of a dream is almost always a case of finding the person of the dreamer in the dream. Some examples of commonly occurring instances may help to clarify this point.

A patient describes a dream as an interesting spectacle that he witnessed, almost as if it were a movie or TV program written and acted by others. "Isn't that fascinating," such a style of reporting implies, "you don't think it has anything to do with me?" While one step up from the unremembered dream, such a mode of experiencing and reporting serves to disconnect the dream from the person. If the analyst is to do anything he must help this patient feel that the dream was written, produced, directed and acted by himself.

Another patient may have the clear sense that the dream is his own, indeed he may feel frightened, troubled, guilty or angry in relation to it. Yet much of it may remain a mystery -- "I recognize myself but where did those other people come from?" "I can't figure out why that happened." People, locations, emotions, actions, may all be mysterious, not understood or confused. Again, a principal function of such symbolic "disguise" is to keep from awareness the role of the person's own impulses, actions, wishes and conflicts. As the analyst works at clarifying such confusions, mysteries and blocks to understanding, he helps the patient find himself in the dream, helps him see the impulses and wishes he was too frightened or guilty to consciously acknowledge.

Another patient may report a dream filled with blood, gore, and murderous violence, yet say, "Maybe I was upset when I dreamt that, but it all seems bland now, like a corny old movie." The dream is recalled and potentially connected to oneself but the affective impact is blunted and denied. The communication is of the form, "I had this dream, but my anger is not to be taken seriously." In this instance, the analyst's interpretive task is to point out the minimization of threatening affect, with the goal of connecting such feelings to the conscious self.

The process of working with reported dream material, even in patients well along in psychoanalysis, lends itself to a great variety of defensive or resistive operations which keep the meaning of the dream hidden or latent. The patient may connect the people, scenes, and actions in the dream to various day residues: "Joe was in the

dream because I talked to him yesterday and I guess there was an argument because I saw that TV program last night where everyone was arguing." While associations to day residues may often prove useful, when the patient stops with them he is communicating, "This is all the dream means, it has nothing to do with my feelings about Joe or what he represents, nothing to do with my wish to argue." Again, the analyst's task is to point out the constriction of meaning involved in the patient's exclusive focus on day residues.

Now, as all these examples have illustrated, when we make interpretations of this sort we are not, strictly speaking, uncovering latent or hidden content. The interpretive task is, rather, to suggest alternative ways of viewing the dream report. The therapist points to what the patient does not see, or denies, or claims not to feel, or is confused or mystified by. If a good working relationship is present, at least a part of the patient's communication is, "I don't understand this, it is unintelligible to me, I need your help in making sense out of it." And the analyst, with his interpretations and constructions, suggests ways that the dream may be understood, almost always by linking aspects of it to the patient's experience of self.

LATENT CONTENT, LATENT MEANING, ALTERNATIVE CONSTRUCTIONS

The opening sentence of The Interpretation of Dreams reads:

In the pages that follow I shall bring forward proof that there is a psychological technique which makes it possible to interpret dreams, and that, if that procedure is employed, every dream reveals itself as a psychical structure which has a meaning and which can be inserted at an assignable point in the mental activities of waking life. [Freud, 1900, p. 1]

Freud is saying, in a very clear way, that to interpret a dream is to make a relatively meaningless psychological event more meaningful, to take an unconnected phenomena and give it a place in the "mental activities of waking life." What is latent is not content but meaning: the analyst, with his interpretation, provides a construction -- a model or mini-theory -- that suggests a more complete, coherent -- and hence more meaningful -- explanation for the dream in the surrounding context of the patient's associations, relationships, and life history.

But Freud also uses the terms "latent content" and, perhaps even more misleading, "latent dream thoughts" -- implying that what is latent is a repository of specific content: thoughts, repressed ideas, traumatic memories, and forbidden impulses. Indeed when an insightful dream interpretation is made, it can release new material -- new associations, forgotten memories, withheld emotions -- which is how we, as analysts, often judge the correctness of our interpretations. Doesn't this release of fresh material "from the unconscious" indicate that it is content that is latent? Let me attempt to further clarify this question.

When a patient reports a dream the report is surrounded by other sorts of communications. He may lead up to the dream by describing events of the day that preceded it, and the report itself is then followed by more communications. As every analyst knows, the form of these surrounding communications are as varied as are people. One patient may meticulously associate to each element in the dream while another may take off into fantasies stimulated by the general

theme or feeling tone. Another may block: "I can't think of anything, I don't know what that dream means," or the report may be followed by silence, itself a communication. Still another may "change the subject": go directly from the dream to seemingly unrelated matters. And some patients, experienced in analysis, may attempt to relate the dream to the analyst or aspects of the process, while others may fearfully avoid doing so. It is a good analytic or therapeutic rule to treat everything that surrounds the reported dream as an association -- as material potentially related to it. This includes silence, the seemingly unrelated material, casual remarks on entering the office, and so on. All are potential clues that may be used in understanding the meaning of a particular dream. Using as much of this information as seems important, the analyst arrives at his interpretation, his way of drawing together the dream, the surrounding communications, and his knowledge of the patient, into a meaningful whole. When such an interpretation works -- when it releases a flow of rich confirmatory feelings, ideas and memories -- we speak of having penetrated to the unconscious or of the release of the latent thoughts or content. Yet, while this is the way we talk about and experience the effects of a successfully interpreted dream, a further clarification is required. There is always content surrounding a dream, a "wrong" interpretation or no interpretation are followed by content, on his own the patient surrounded his version of the dream with comments, qualifications, and feelings. So it is not the case that a correct interpretation produces new content that rushes in to fill a void of no content; rather, it is a matter of the contrast of one kind of content with another. The content

that follows a successful interpretation is of a special quality, and it is this quality that we have in mind when we speak of the release of unconscious material or latent dream content. What is this quality? Essentially it comes from a feeling of intelligibility, meaningfulness and coherence. That is to say, the patient had a version of what his dream meant -- however fragmentary, incomplete and unspoken -- but it was a version that could only be maintained by ignoring large chunks of evidence. The version suggested by the analyst's interpretation encompasses more of the evidence and, when the timing and relationship are right -- the patient not too anxious or resistant -- he can hear and use the new version suggested by the analyst's interpretation. The "release" of unconscious material is the patient putting the new, more intelligible version to work on previously unconnected pieces of information. So what feels like new content -- and it often feels that way to both patient and analyst -- is, more accurately, a realignment, a bringing together of warded off or defended thoughts, feelings, fantasies, impulses, views of oneself and important others.

It is not hidden content that is latent in a dream, but hidden meaning. This is easier to see in some patients than in others. For instance, the person who relies heavily on repression may feel blank and unknowing in relation to a dream and the analyst's interpretation may release "forgotten" material that seems to fill the blank. By contrast, an obsessive-compulsive patient may provide the ingredients for a "correct" interpretation, but bury them in such a profusion of competing explanations and qualifications that their significance is obscured. In such a case, the correct interpretation

consists of cutting through the extraneous material and highlighting the core issue. With both kinds of patients, the overall goal is to provide a more intelligible version of their personal experience.

In sum, "latent content," or even "latent meaning," are somewhat misleading concepts; we should, more accurately, speak of alternative constructions. The patient has a construction of his symptoms and neurosis; that is, he has a version that is highly defended or with key feelings and thoughts dissociated from his conscious self. The analyst suggests a construction -- a way of viewing the dream and the related thoughts, and emotions -- in a more coherent form, a form that ties much more of the "data" of personal experience together.

The recognition that we are dealing with alternative constructions should alert us to the fact that there is, indeed, more than one interpretation to a dream, just as there is to a symptom or neurotic patterns more generally. Since the patient's version is so often inadequate -- by virtue of all that goes into making him a patient -- it is easy for us as therapists to believe that there is a hidden (latent, unconscious) meaning -- a meaning that we know and the patient does not. There are two kinds of dangers here, two kinds of misuse of interpretation that are ever present in psychoanalytic work. The first is the danger associated with certainty, with the feeling that we, as analysts, know the "real" content of the unconscious and must force (however slowly and carefully) the patient to accept it. This approach tends to go along with a concrete view of "latent content" and, at its worst, leads to those procrustean interpretive stands

where all patients are fit within some narrow mold. The awareness that interpretations are alternative constructions can help guard against this sort of psychoanalytic egocentrism.

The second danger lies at the other extreme; it is the danger of forgetting all the important truths that Freud discovered about infantile sexuality, human aggression, and the ubiquity of anxiety and guilt. To put it another way, while a variety of alternative constructions of a dream, symptom, or neurosis are possible, not all alternatives are equal: psychoanalytic experience consistently points to certain central configurations of impulse, anxiety, and defense -- of early experience and later character -- that we rely on as general guidelines in formulating our interpretations. I do not think that our use of this sort of psychoanalytic experience contradicts the idea that interpretations are alternative constructions; it simply indicates that the process of formulating such interpretations occurs in a context where much experience has accumulated. We would be foolish to ignore such experience, yet we can use it without falling prey to the first danger: that of taking the guidelines and clinical rules-of-thumb for established laws.

Throughout the foregoing discussion, certain connections between the latent meaning of a dream and the unconscious meaning of neurotic symptoms and character problems have been noted. Similarly, it is clear that the model of interpreting a dream is the same -- or very close to -- the model of other types of psychoanalytic interpretation. A neurosis (and I am using the term broadly and loosely) is like a dream; it embodies a set of rules -- largely unconscious -- that govern the

patient's view of himself and others. Psychoanalytic interpretations, of both dreams and neurotic phenomena, involve the exposure of such "rules" -- schemas of personal action, persistent fantasies, modes in which characteristic relationships with key others are structured -- to conscious view. Thus, the interpretation of the latent meaning of a dream is one instance of the kind of interpretations that constitute psychoanalytic work more generally, interpretive work whose aim is insight, "making the unconscious conscious," or, as I have been describing it, shifting from constricted "theories," schemas, or sets of rules about oneself and others to more comprehensive, meaningful, and coherent ones. This account of psychoanalytic interpretation may seem a bit abstract and unemotional, so let me turn, now, to an actual case which will bring together examples of dreams and dream interpretations with other kinds of interpretive work over the course of an analysis.

A WAY OUT OF SADOMASOCHISM: THE CASE OF EMILY FOX*

The patient, whom I will call Emily Fox, was an attractive, charming, outgoing woman in her late twenties. She sought analysis because she was unable to live with her husband in their newly-purchased

* In order to protect the privacy of the participants, I will use pseudonyms and change other identifying information without, I hope, distorting anything of importance in the case. It should also be apparent that I have selected a small portion from the large amount of material available in a lengthy analysis and that my selection is dictated by the wish to illustrate certain issues concerning dreams and their interpretation. Again, I hope I have done this in a way that does not distort the picture of the case. The dreams are reported verbatim with, again, the modification of certain identifying information.

unconsciously, arranged to lose them. If they were unattached and simply interested in her, she would not become involved. And, finally, the men tended to be "bad" in some minor way which she elaborated in her fantasies: one had a history of fighting and delinquency as an adolescent, another drank too much and got fired from his job, and so on.

Several things emerged about her need to maintain this series of ultimately unsatisfying relationships. First, they were the enactment of a masochistic fantasy: she continually felt like the abused sexual victim of these big, bad men. And second, her neurosis -- or perversion (see Stoller, 1975, for one of the best theoretical accounts of this kind of disturbance) -- consisted of acting out or living out this pattern of relationships in which she divided herself between two or more men as a protection against a complete emotional commitment. It was not only orgasms that she did not feel; we came to see how she was blocked from commitment, and could not feel in a variety of other ways as well.

A central task of the analysis, persistently worked at over a period of years, was the interpretation of this living out, its diminuation, and her concomitant increased emotional commitment to the analytic relationship. As this shift in the balance occurred, she was able to bring into the analysis the fantasies and emotions that she had warded off with the living out of her masochistic pattern. We were eventually able to penetrate to the unconscious core of her neurosis -- to reveal the innermost latent content -- and it is the unravelling of this material that I wish to illustrate with several key dreams. But first a sketch of her history and background.

Emily was the first of three children; a brother, Bob, was born when she was three, and a sister, Barbara, a little over a year later. Her mother's mother had died when the mother was young and the maternal grandfather -- a large, gruff German immigrant -- lived with the family in their house in a large eastern city until Emily was eight. "Granpop" was an important figure in her early life. There were memories of being his favorite little girl, of a sexualized closeness and, antecedent to her masochism, of performing for his friends -- what we came to call "being Granpop's little slave girl" -- as well as outbursts of violent discipline from him that caused her great pain. When she was eight the family moved to the suburbs, but Granpop didn't come; he remarried at that time and Emily was more or less conscious of her anger and jealousy at the new wife, whom she refused to call "Grandma." This woman died a year later.

Father worked all his life as a middle-level civil servant and her feelings toward him were quite mixed: at times she felt close and loving, at other times enraged at his inadequacies and his inhibitions which kept him from showing her affection. Mother was clearly the emotional hub of the family; simultaneously warm, loving, generous and devoted to her children and also, in Emily's eyes, stupid, uneducated, erratic, and disturbed: sexually provocative with men and repressive with her daughter, "hung up" on her father (Grandpop) and unable to provide a consistent or acceptable model of femininity. Emily grew up an outwardly "good" and dutiful child, did well in school, went off to a small local college where unsatisfactory relations with boyfriends foreshadowed the problems to come. She married her husband,

a "nice guy" from the neighborhood (she imagined herself more sophisticated and sexually experienced) whom she had known slightly in high school, and they moved across the country as he pursued his professional education.

This sketch of her family and history is largely in the terms that it emerged in the early phase of the analysis and, aside from the involvement with Granpop, connects only superficially with what was later to prove the central experiences that formed her neurotic character. I will save this material until later and present it as it emerged from the analysis of her dreams.

The First Dream

(About four months into the analysis she reported a dream -- not the first of the analysis -- but one of special importance.)

I was living with my family in a farming village or pueblo and some Arab marauders came and bargained with the farmers for twenty young women that they wanted to take away to their oasis in the desert. I'm one of the women: we are bathed, oiled, and prepared for the trip across the desert on camelback. I enjoy this trek, I feel strong, tough, and able to withstand the hardship. We get to the oasis and we -- all the women -- are taken into an underground cavern or dungeon where we are placed in compartments around the side of a sort of cave. It feels cold and there is water dripping. The other women all seem complacent and happy, but I feel more and more suspicious. I don't trust them, it seems like there is going to be some kind of sacrifice -- like the Aztecs used to do -- of one or all of us. I also feel threatened in a sexual way

Her associations were mainly to the untrustworthy men and

connected to anger at the various men she was currently involved with. She associated being carried off to her husband's taking her across the country and to anger at him for being a weak man like her father. An interpretive comment that she was feeling less depressed and guilty as her anger was more openly expressed led to further associations concerning Granpop, his loss, and her fear that her anger can drive men away and she will be alone.

The reader, no doubt, can see much more in this rich and complicated dream than we dealt with at this early phase of the analysis. A major theme at this time concerned her anger at men and its roots in her disappointment with her father and grandfather. While expressing these feelings gave her relief from the immediate guilt and depression, the anger and complaints were centered on issues close to consciousness -- complaints about her husband's "nice guy" qualities or her father's inadequacy and stinginess which forced her to work to buy her own clothes -- which hardly explained the degree of her fearfulness, her inability to live with her husband or the masochistic relationships. Let us approach some "deeper" explanations as these are suggested by the dream -- dimensions that only emerged much later in the analysis.

First, the dream is almost a classic representation of sexual-masochistic surrender. She is the victim who draws strength from her ability to endure pain and hardship. And it is others who possess all the sadism -- she experiences herself in the dream as she does in life: the victim of other people's mistreatment and brutality. Second, the dream may be taken in its transference aspect: analysis is a journey away from her past and family into the underground cavern of her

unconscious. And, like all the other relationships of intimacy in her life, she is prepared and expects to experience it as a masochistic victim. Indeed, this was a difficult resistance for a very long time: she outwardly complied with the analysis in almost every particular, yet did not achieve major improvements -- she continued to live out the pattern with men -- and, with fantasy and the displacing of emotion (she would cry in her car after the session, feel sexually excited or hurt with a boyfriend and nothing with me), kept herself protected from a full emotional involvement. Finally, there is a point -- just hinted at in the dream -- of the emergence of intense anxiety: the Aztec sacrifice. The wet underground cave with women in compartments suggests the inside of a woman's body, especially a pregnant woman. And the Aztec sacrifice suggests the image of a woman's body being cut open and some living thing being ripped out. We will see, later, where these images came from and how they related to her sadomasochism.

The Second Dream

(This dream was reported ten months later, about fourteen months into the analysis.)

Dorothy and I are students at some kind of dental hygiene college or school [in reality, Dorothy was a young woman who had replaced Emily as secretary when she left to take another job]. There is a man who is the head of the school, he looks like a middle-aged banker in a suit, he has a very polished outward manner, but he seems sinister to me, as if he is some kind of devil disguised as a banker. We [Dorothy and she] are walking around the halls of the school and I realize that a girl, one of the other students, has been killed. I open one of the doors, it's a bathroom and

it looks like the bathtub is filled with blood and guts, so I quickly close the door. Then I'm scared, we have to act like nothing happened and sneak out of the building -- not let on that we know a crime has been committed. We meet the schoolmaster-banker guy on the stairs and he's smiling and acting like everything is all right. But when he shakes hands I see blood under his fingernail, so I know he murdered the other girl. We escape -- we run across the street -- now it's this street [where she comes for analysis]. In the end I'm down at the airport and it feels like we are waiting for my father to come and pick us up.

Her associations -- and material in adjacent hours -- all concerned the theme of her ambivalence with men: her anger at them, the feeling that they exploit her and can't be trusted, and her extreme dependency and fear of being alone. She was, at this point, more able to explore this ambivalence in the analytic relationship, for I seem clearly represented in the dream. Still, as with the first dream, we had not penetrated to the "deeper" levels. What was the meaning of the blood and guts she can only briefly sneak a look at? Who does Dorothy -- her "replacement" -- stand for? Whose murderous wishes are depicted and who is the real victim? From the material so far presented there are obvious connections with masculinity-femininity. Does the murdered young girl symbolize Emily's "castration" and resulting penis envy -- her wish to retaliate by castrating men in revenge? She was certainly angry at them and this was a construction of some usefulness though, in the end, it turned out not as central as others. The deeper meaning of this dream, like the first one, was not reconstructed until much later.

The Infantile Neurosis

I will just comment briefly on certain key issues that emerged over the next three years of the analysis. A good deal of work was done on the connection of her early role as "Granpop's little slave girl" and the way in which this served as a prototype for her current masochistic relations with tall, "bad" men. (Having two men, father and Granpop, had an obvious connection with her current penchant for always having at least two men "in her life.") Of particular importance was her jealous rage when he left her for his new wife. As we worked through this Granpop transference -- she revealed that she sometimes cringed on the couch, half expecting I would whack her in the head as Granpop used to -- it became clear that the Granpop pattern had developed as both a displacement and repetition of a still earlier traumatic relationship with her mother. This brought us finally to the origins of that nucleus of fear of being alone, rage, jealousy and the specific images of blood, guts, and a particular kind of murder.

From a variety of converging dreams, associations and fantasies it became clear that she was terrified of pregnancy, childbirth and infants. (In a secondary sense this was why she couldn't stay in her marriage: having children was the natural next step.) There was a dream in which she was a pioneer woman, crossing the West in a wagon train, who begins to bleed from a pregnancy and knows she will die since there are no doctors available. As these fears were expressed, a crucial early memory was reexperienced. When she was two (nineteen months, as she later found out by checking with her mother), her mother,

five months pregnant, began to bleed. Granpop -- who had lost his wife to uterine cancer -- was panicked. There was a vivid image of mother in bed with her legs raised, of blood all over, of Granpop and an aunt scurrying around while she, Emily, sat in a chair, her feet dangling far above the floor, frightened and forgotten. Mother had the miscarriage at home and was then taken to the hospital where she remained for some time. Emily was cared for by Granpop, father and the aunt who lived nearby.

This experience was traumatic in at least two major ways: there was the obvious fear connected with the blood and possible death, communicated in a contagious way by the adults who, with their own background and fears, were insensitive to the special reactions of the nineteen-month-old Emily and unable to give her the needed support. And there was the loss of the very special closeness with mother. As she knows from seeing mother with other babies -- including her grandchildren -- she is a real "earth mother" with infants, she holds them on her hip as she goes about her housework and is very warm and physically affectionate. The trauma of the miscarriage was the first instance of Emily's loss of this close, loving relationship with mother -- a loss that was repeated two more times before she was five, with the births of her brother and sister. In each instance she saw mother's belly swell -- raising the possibility of blood, death and loss, and both times she lost mother to the hospital and, more importantly, to her replacement, the new baby.

Beginning in those early years, she evolved a "solution" to her dilemma, a solution played out in private doll games and lived out

in the real-fantasy relations with her father and, especially, with Granpop who had no wife. In this fantasy solution she turned her rejection and abandonment by mother around; she imagined-played at being the favorite, Granpop's special love; in a sense she replaced his other daughter, her mother, just as her brother and sister had replaced her. Later she came to emphasize her coolness and emotional control as qualities that made her superior to her volatile and expressive mother. The games and fantasies also expressed her rage and wish to destroy her rivals. But, even during these early years, it felt much too dangerous to express this anger openly for, in contrast to her fantasied superiority, she was really just a little girl completely dependent on the love and care of her mother. Her parents, and Granpop with his German background, would not tolerate anger or defiance toward authority; outwardly she was rewarded for being a "good girl," "Mommy's helper" with the new baby, and a "big girl" (one who didn't cry, show temper or act like a baby). So the desire to be a baby, along with jealousy, rage and the wish to remove her rivals, went underground into games and fantasies when it was turned on herself. Dolls were killed and she was tied up by evil-doers, awaiting her rescue by some man: Granpop as mother-substitute. In other words, the sadism was disconnected from herself while she became consciously identified with the victim.

This "solution" -- the infantile neurosis that was the prototype for her adult sadomasochistic life pattern -- may have been necessary at age five but, of course, it left her frustrated, anxious, and guilty as an adult. One of the most basic sources of her rage at men -- experienced most vividly in the transference and in relation to her

husband -- was that we were not her mother! She wanted to be held and cuddled like an infant and was always, at base, frustrated and angry over demands for other, more mature forms of relationships, especially sex. The uncovering of the infantile neurosis also explained her intensely jealous reactions to rival figures: her "replacements." It suggests that the murder in the second dream, coupled with the presence of Dorothy -- her replacement -- symbolized her wish to murder her baby sister. Several other related issues were clarified: her almost phobic reaction to menstrual blood and a similar fearful response to the shape of pregnant women.

There was a clear mother transference during this period and, in this context, she was finally able to reexperience her murderous jealousy to her sister, with its attendant guilt and turning of sadism to masochism.

The Third Dream

(This dream and the one to follow were reported on adjacent days, approximately four years and four months into the analysis.)

George [her husband, from whom she remained separated at this time] is going to marry someone else and my mother is going back to protest the marriage. I fly home to stop her -- we have a big argument where she says she'll stand up in the church and protest and I say, "What could you say about it?" Then I go to talk with George, he's at a summer beach house like in the movie Julia, with screened-in porches. He goes in by lifting an edge of the screen and oozing under, and I get frantic that I can't get through and yell for him to help me, but he just calmly points to a chair next to where he is sitting, so I have to go all around halls and rooms

to finally get there. There are some cheese and crackers and a big knife on a table; he sits in the "Papa bear's chair" and I sit in a smaller one. I'm telling him about mother going to break up the wedding and he says, "It doesn't matter." I get more and more upset and tell him, "Please don't marry her, you don't know her." He's very nice but he doesn't change. I get hysterical and start slugging him in the face -- wham, wham -- the phone rings and he picks it up, "Sure you can borrow the garden hose" -- [he talks calmly to a neighbor]. He is so imperturbable it just makes me angrier. I reach over to the little table [as she says this, she gestures with her arm, touches a small table next to the couch and laughs as if in recognition of a connection] and grab the knife and stab him. I'm worried, but he's not even bleeding -- nothing I do can change him. I melt, crumble to the floor, and then wake up crying, with my heart pounding.

There were a variety of associations to the dream, including many of the insights we had worked on in recent months: (1) George did have a new girlfriend, and Emily was jealous, he was "helping her" now but in the dream wouldn't help Emily; (2) being held and cuddled by her current boyfriend didn't work any more; (3) it wasn't really George -- she was angry with her mother for leaving her, and took it out on him; (4) she was angry because he was a man who didn't bleed out of a "slit" the way she did; (5) she can't get to her mother any more because Barbara (her sister) is there, nor to Granpop because of his new wife; (6) she has to do things on her own now, not with some fantasy of being little. All these associations and insights were useful to her and she felt much less anxious and guilty as the hour proceeded. Yet something was missing: the obvious transference connection depicted in the dream (the impassive man, unresponsive to her pleas and feelings, the connection of the table). My focus on

this led to a rush of feeling and additional association: that she is more and more committed to me and the analysis and, as she feels herself getting better, fears the impending loss. And then she began to be aware of her anger at me for "taking away her fantasy," for the way in which analytic insight is making it impossible for her to continue her pattern of sadomasochistic, divided relationships. So in the throes of this mother transference -- that is, when she is giving up the fantasy solution of other men as mother-substitutes and feels herself most completely committed to the analyst-as-mother, she experiences, in this dream and its associations, intense rage at a rival who will replace her and has the specific wish to stab the mother-husband-analyst in the belly.

The Fourth Dream

It's like scenes in a movie to show time going by: I'm with a man, warm and cuddly in bed; then I'm pregnant; then I'm holding a baby; then the baby is two and the police come to the door. I know my husband has been killed. Then I'm at the funeral, the baby is there, I go and look in the casket and it's you! [the analyst]. I hate you for leaving me and have this terrible sad feeling.

Her associations touched on the reality of the feeling in the dream: "I'll never get married again, or have a baby -- it's too vulnerable." Then she spoke of the reality of her involvement with the analysis, how she caught herself on the way to the hour "plotting to gather men around me again," as a protection against feeling left and alone but then realized that she must continue to work it out. This

was followed by an "achy-clawing" feeling -- like a baby reaching out to be held. She then reported a dream-like series of associations: the baby reaching out to be held, fantasies of stabbing someone, she saw scissors -- very sharp -- babies crawling around on the floor. She is sewing, a baby is crawling toward the sharp scissors, she has to get there so it doesn't cut itself; no, she is pregnant -- like in the dream -- it's so the baby won't stab her in the belly, to kill the other baby! She came out of this reverie with "It doesn't take Sigmund Freud to figure that out; I want to stab my mother and kill the next baby -- it wasn't Bob [her brother, the first sibling replacement], it was Barbara -- that time I knew what was going to happen." She then went on with a variety of confirmatory associations, including her rage at "having to be Barbara's little slave girl, helping mommy with the diapers, because I needed her love so much." At the heart of it all was the emotionally powerful realization that she feels and acts like an abandoned infant who wants to kill her sister and that her whole life is run by jealousy.

It is interesting to note the multiple identifications in this dream and its associations; they are much like her play as a young child in which she took different roles and acted out the various feelings. She is the baby in danger who must be saved (as she felt when abandoned or left alone); she is the mother who must protect the baby (her identification with her "good mother," being "Mommy's helper," a "big girl"); she is the pregnant mother with her rival inside (the masochism, she attacks herself); and finally, she is the enraged and jealous baby who wants to stab her "bad mother" and kill her rival

(the most unconscious of her early wishes and fantasies). We assume she was aware of her jealous rage and wish to stab mother at the time her mother was pregnant with Barbara. But even then, an open expression of these feelings and wishes was extremely dangerous; they quickly became hidden in the private world of symbolic play and fantasy. Thus, the reconstruction of them in the analysis brings out material from the "deepest" level of the unconscious -- a point to which I will return.

There is much material in these two dreams that could be further explored but I will leave that aside and focus on the core issue: the reversal of masochism back into sadism. In the third dream and her associations to the fourth we see a striking contrast to the earlier dreams -- and her conscious feelings of victimization. She can now dream and think of herself as the aggressor. In reconstructing these early memories, images, feelings and fantasies associated with the creation of her neurosis, we reached the point of the original rage and jealousy which this time -- in the analytic relationship -- could be openly expressed, rather than turned on herself. In this sense, we undid the symbolic complexities of the fantasy solution to her original infantile dilemma, where she could not express her rage openly, but turned, instead, to the masochistic fantasy solution.

DISCUSSION

Let us return now to the consideration of latent content, latent meaning and alternative constructions -- and the more general issue of becoming conscious of the unconscious -- and see what the case of Emily Fox illustrates about the version of these concepts I presented

earlier. One reason I chose this particular case is that the dramatic memory of her mother's miscarriage, along with the reexperiencing of the murderous fantasies, are as clear instances of the "recovery" of unconscious material as we see in psychoanalysis. This certainly seems like an uncovering of "latent content" -- of actual unconscious memories, fantasies and feelings -- so it should prove a good test of the claims that what is latent is not "content" but meaning; that becoming conscious of what was previously unconscious is a matter of developing an alternative construction of the self.

What was unconscious in Emily that she became conscious of in the course of her analysis? Here is a list, not necessarily in the order they occurred:

1. Specific Memories from Early Childhood. The trauma of mother's miscarriage and subsequent absence and the rage during the later pregnancies were the most striking. There were also important memories of grandfather's abandonment of her for his second wife and her jealousy at that time. These memories were most like the "recovery" of deep unconscious material -- and so I described them in the report -- yet even in these instances she probably did not reproduce duplicates of the original experiences in the analysis. It was more a case of allowing herself to get into an approximation of the original emotional state -- to regress in the analysis -- and then producing memory-fantasies with the schemas active in that state.

2. Consciousness of Her Unconscious. As happens in most successful analyses, she came to see that a great deal of what

she did and felt in her adult life was dictated by sources she was not aware of. She did not know this at first, but later came to speak of her "whole life being a fantasy," of "playing out games," "macho sex trips," and of "my gathering men around me number."

3. Her Masochism. First, she became aware of how masochistic she was. She saw that there was a meaningful pattern to her never having orgasms despite wild sexual adventures, not letting herself feel openly in the analysis, not being able to stay with her husband, working beneath her level of skill and education as a secretary, and putting herself in a position to be abused by "big, bad men." She became aware of the consistency and force of this pattern of self-denial and victimization, and of its gratifications as well, of her fear and guilt, and then of the prototype for the pattern in her childhood.

4. The Infantile Neurosis. Eventually, we reconstructed the specific play-fantasy solution to the dilemma posed by her abandonment, anxiety, and rage at her mother and saw how she play-lived it out, first with her grandfather and then with the men in her adult life.

5. Her Rage, Jealousy and Sadistic Fantasies. She came to see how, for her, the world was filled with rivals for her primary love object; how she was driven to replace them -- kill them -- how angry she was and how frightened and guilty at the degree and extent of her rage. She sought revenge on men for what her mother had done to her; there was a great deal of hostility behind her compliant facade -- especially with me and her husband.

6. The Transference. While I have not emphasized it in this account, the major work in the analysis revolved around transference interpretations. She came to see how she related to me as a compliant slave-girl, divided herself between me and other men, felt rage at her rivals (other patients) and, eventually, felt like killing me because I was not her exclusive mother, even as she felt close and appreciative of my help.

In these examples of how Emily became conscious of her unconscious we can see a variety of operations at work. In some cases, events were forgotten -- the childhood traumas -- in others they were remembered, but without much emotion. Sometimes she experienced the event and the feeling, but to the wrong person, for instance when she was frightened and angry because of what men did to her. And, sometimes she turned things around -- did to others what she felt had been done to her. In all these instances we achieved various levels or degrees of awareness as the analysis progressed. There were a variety of constructions -- for instance, early work dealing with anger at her father for his stinginess during her adolescence or the whole Granpop pattern -- that were not wrong so much as they were incomplete. Such constructions brought more of her feelings and actions into consciousness but they did not tell the entire story of her fear and rage toward men -- a story that could only be completed with the reconstruction of the earlier material regarding her mother.

This work of construction and reconstruction, of the bringing to light of forgotten events and feelings, of experiencing new ways -- or long repressed old ways -- of acting in an intimate relationship,

first in the analytic situation and then with others, proceeded gradually over more than four years of analysis. Each part of this process involved insight, a change from unconscious to conscious, the making manifest of what was latent. No one recovered or reconstructed memory, no one shift from submissiveness to assertion, no single insight into her masochistic pattern, in and of itself was crucial. It was, rather, the gradual development along all these lines that constituted the overall change in her character structure.

With this change completed, it is possible to look back and summarize the overall shift from a life dominated by unconscious motivation to her reconstructed, more insightful, self. When she began the analysis she had a conscious version -- or several related versions -- of herself. She was a nice, compliant, somewhat subservient, young woman -- afraid to talk back to her boss or to work up to her level of skill, and angry at men for taking advantage of her. This version was maintained by a variety of operations which kept from consciousness -- displaced, rationalized, reversed, minimized -- the whole set of feelings and wishes which, as we have seen, came to light in the course of the analysis. This was a very unstable situation; she could not really keep this defended version of herself going; too many inexplicable feelings kept breaking through; most of her sex life -- with all its feelings of power, dominance and submission -- was lived in secret; she kept "doing" things -- leaving her husband, seducing different men -- that did not fit her conscious image or version of herself. It was like an inadequate scientific theory or an outmoded religion that is constantly challenged by observations it cannot explain. The instability,

along with the painful feelings and lack of real satisfaction in relationships, is what drove her to analysis. The gradual accumulation of insights in the analysis involved more and more open expression of the warded off experiences, feelings and actions. What was before expressed in secret fantasy or played-lived out in relationships, where it was felt to happen to others -- dolls, dream figures, men, herself going through the motions or "faking it" -- was gradually felt to be her in a living-feeling, committed relationship. Along with this shift in the mode of experiencing, there was insight of the more intellectual variety; she came to understand how and why she did what she did. These changes in both experience and understanding constituted the change in her character structure. She ceased to feel every woman as a rival, and made close women friends for the first time in years; she was no longer subject to severe anxiety when "left" or threatened with being alone; she stopped dividing herself between two or more men, stopped taking her revenge on them; and she could be openly angry with me, her husband and her mother, as well as more emotionally committed. All these changes were part of a new structure of the self (or expanded self and object schemas), a structure which, like a new and better scientific theory, could encompass more of the data of her life. With this new, expanded version of herself, she could tolerate her rage -- it did not mean she would kill her love objects, or be left by them, she was not a horribly guilty child for feeling it -- understand where it came from and, eventually, stop directing it at substitute figures.

This change in character structure -- in one's basic "theory" about how one is -- is like a personal copernican revolution, like a

powerful religious conversion experience. One clings to the old, neurotic version just as the committed believer does to his belief system. In Emily's case there was a protracted and difficult struggle -- the familiar resistance -- in modifying the version of herself that had developed in early childhood to deal with her painful and threatening situation. Part of the difficulty of changing came from exchanging the security of the known for the unknown, as it does in any shift in a major belief system. But the main source of the resistance was emotional, as it usually is. Her old version of herself protected her from directly feeling like a helpless and abandoned child and like a guilty, jealous killer. To give up the old -- unconscious, defended -- version was to reexperience herself in those painful, humiliating and guilty ways, as a necessary prelude to the reconstruction of herself in a broader, more coherent, form. In this new form -- this new theory or model of herself-- there was a place for jealousy, rage and sadistic fantasies, for fear, guilt and revenge, as well as for adult commitment and, perhaps even some day, for pregnancy and motherhood.

To say that this new version of herself was "latent," or existed in her unconscious, is to say that she and I had the capability of working together to achieve the reorganization of her life experience that we finally did achieve. It was latent in the sense that the form of a statue is latent in a piece of marble: such a potential is only brought into existence by the activity of the sculptor, just as the patient and analyst create a new consciousness, from the materials of the patient's life, with their activity over the course of the analysis.

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